

BE WELL

May 2017

Volume 10, Issue 5

The Tolland Buzz



Outsmart Ticks this Season with Prevention!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Many people avoid hiking or taking a walk in the woods at this time of year for fear they will get Lyme Disease.

[With an average of 3,000 cases a year in Connecticut](#) since 1998 and reports of other tick-borne infections, it is not surprising. However, awareness and prevention are the best ways to protect yourself and loved ones from these illnesses while still enjoying nature and the warm weather.

Lyme Disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and spreads from the bite of blacklegged tick, commonly known as deer tick. Keep in mind, not all deer ticks are infected with this bacteria and more importantly, research has found Lyme infection is unlikely if the tick is attached for **less than 24-36 hours**. Therefore preventing ticks from attaching to you, your children and pets is one of your most effective defenses for this disease. This can be accomplished by wearing light colored clothing to spot ticks easily. It is best practice to wear shoes, long pants tucked into your socks, long-sleeved shirts, and hats. Insect repellents with 20% or more DEET will discourage ticks from staying on you. Permethrin, another repellent, can be applied to clothing and equipment and kill ticks upon contact. The Center for Disease Control has [suggestions for natural tick repellents](#) as well.

To decrease ticks in your yard keep your lawn mowed, cut overgrown brush, and clear away leaf litter. Get rid of Japanese Barberry bushes which attract both deer ticks and mice which

may carry tick borne illness. After walking in the woods, low bushes, tall grass, or even doing yardwork you should shower immediately and check yourself for ticks. These parasites can be the size of a poppy seed in the nymph stage or as small as a pinhead when full grown, so take care to thoroughly inspect yourself. Clothing should also be washed right after coming indoors.

If you do find a tick on you [remove it as soon as possible](#). If it has attached to your skin you may need to use tweezers. Gently grasp the tick near its head or mouth. Don't squeeze or crush the tick, but pull carefully and steadily straight up. Once you've removed the entire tick, dispose of it or place in a sealed, plastic bag for lab testing. Thoroughly wash the area of the bite with soap and water and put an antiseptic on it. Continue to check this area daily for 30 days for any sign of expanding redness or rash.

Although a bull's eye rash is a well known indicator of Lyme Disease, this may or may not be present. More common symptoms include fever/chills, headache, fatigue, and muscle/joint pain.

Treatment for Lyme Disease is more effective if started early so if you have any concerns or symptoms see a healthcare professional right away. Left untreated, Lyme Disease can worsen and cause joint pain and swelling, neurological problems, and even cardiac complications. In most situations, doctors will test for the antibodies from the infection and if needed treat with antibiotics. Unfortunately people can get

Lyme Disease more than once, so continue taking the proper precautions to protect yourself. You are not immune after testing positive.

Ticks can be lab tested to see if they carry Lyme disease. [EHHD provides this service for free](#), but testing may take up to 4 weeks. Other options include the [CT Pathology Lab](#) in Willimantic or [UConn Pathology Testing Lab](#) in Mansfield for faster results.

Unfortunately ticks can spread other diseases besides Lyme Disease. Recently, a rare tick-borne virus was discovered in Connecticut - [the Powassan virus](#). This is spread in the same way Lyme Disease, with an infected tick biting an individual. Therefore prevention with proper clothing, insect repellent, and through self examinations are of utmost importance as described earlier in the article.

Now that you know how to protect yourself, get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Just remember to check for ticks to avoid Lyme Disease.

For more information on protecting yourself from [Lyme Disease please check out our website](#) or click here for the complete [Tick Management Handbook](#).

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HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

- [Bike to Work Week](#) - May 16– 20
- [National Kids To Parks Day](#), Saturday May 20th
- [Sharon's Walk/Run for Epilepsy](#), Sunday May 21st, 11am, Crandall Park, Tolland. Registration is \$25.

Town Wide Tag Sales

- [Coventry's Tag Sale](#) - Saturday, May 6th
- [Mansfield's Tag Sale](#) - Saturday, May 13th, 8am till 4pm/8am till 1pm.
- [Pleasant View Farms](#) - Sunday, May 28th, 8am till 2pm.
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Memorial Day Parades

- Mansfield [Memorial Day Parade](#) - Monday, May 29th 9am.
- Coventry [Memorial Day Parade](#) - Monday, May 29th, 10am.

Sources include: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Public Health Association, Connecticut Dept. of Public Health, Division of Environmental Epidemiology & Occupational Health, Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection

Quick and Easy Black Bean Tacos

Serves 2

Ingredients:

- 15 oz can low-sodium black beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- ¾ cup salsa
- 1/2 cup frozen corn
- 2 cups roughly chopped spinach leaves
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 6 hard shell corn tacos
- Optional: Lime wedges and/or fresh cilantro for serving



Instructions

1. In a large sauté pan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat and add onions. Stir occasionally for 3-4 minutes or until onions become translucent.
2. Next add beans, salsa and corn. Stir mixture and cook about 5 minutes or until heated through.
3. Remove from heat and mix in spinach until wilted.
4. Follow heating instructions on taco shell package.
5. Add mixture to heated taco shells and top with cilantro and squeeze of lime juice if desired.

Time saving tip: Buy fresh salsa found in the produce section refrigerator. Make sure the ingredients are just fresh vegetables like chopped tomatoes, peppers, garlic, onion and cilantro. This adds a lot of flavor and cuts down on prep time. If you use this just skip adding the onion to this recipe and add 1 cup of the fresh salsa to the sauté!



Beware of Mosquitos in Your Yard!



Protect yourself, family and community from West Nile Virus and other diseases spread by mosquitos by making unfavorable living conditions in your yard. Stagnant water lasting more than 7 to 10 days can become breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Avoid having anything in your yard that may collect water such as old tires, clogged roof gutters, containers without drain holes, and plastic wading

pools. Turn over wheelbarrows, and be sure to properly clean and chlorinate swimming pools. Be aware that mosquitoes can breed in water that collects on swimming pool covers as well.

Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves, pants and shoes as well as mosquito repellent, and minimizing time outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitos are most active.

For more information visit the [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection \(DEEP\) website](#) or call (860) 424-4184 for the latest information on test results, spray locations and protective measures.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from your employer. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

